

VZCZCXRO9391
PP RUEHTRO
DE RUEHAS #0997/01 1921639
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 111639Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4032
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1675
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 8600
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 1242
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 5984
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2257
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 1844
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 6684
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3015
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 000997

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/11/2017

TAGS: ASEC CASC PTER AG

SUBJECT: AQIM WEBSITE UPDATE - SHADOWS OF THE SWORD SERIES,
PART II

REF: ALGIERS 950

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Thomas F. Daughton
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On July 3, AQIM released a new video on its website www.qmaghreb.org. Entitled "Shadows of the Sword, Part II," the video features AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdal calling on viewers to repent and support AQIM with money, weapons and by spreading the word. The video shows a January 2007 attack on two military vehicles in the Kabylie region. Within four days of AQIM's announcement of this video, the website received 2,446 hits and the video 878. Embassy contacts identified the riot footage inserted into the attack video as coming from the 2001 civil unrest in the town of Khenchla. Contacts claim that the timing and substance of the video is in response to GOA press statements that it has vanquished AQIM in the Kabylie region. They assert that the release of this video seeks to show AQIM's prowess to Kabylie regional leaders as well as to GOA officials. This could have been a perfect opportunity for AQIM to demonstrate its allegiance to al-Qaeda by pursuing an international target. Instead, AQIM appears to remain domestic in focus. End Summary.

Shadows of the Sword - Part II

¶2. (C) Part I was a lengthy multi-segment video focused on various aspects of recruitment (reftel). Part II is a 25-minute video that shows AQIM destroying a military target in January 2007. On July 8, Echourouk el-Youmi editor Anis Rahmani told PolOffs that inserted in this 2007 attack video is footage of a 2001 riot in Khenchla that led to unrest in the Kabylie region. Rahmani attributed AQIM's need to issue a video about Kabylie to respond to numerous articles in which the GOA claimed to have vanquished the group in that region.

Introduction

¶3. (U) The video starts and ends with Droukdal reading from a script. He calls upon viewers to stop supporting the military generals who drink liquor and defile women. He insists that AQIM does not love killing but loves Islam. He pledges to continue fighting until every scrap of Islamic land is liberated from the Crusaders. An animated sword then slices a general's hat in two.

AQIM's Example of a Successful Attack

¶ 14. (U) A narrator boasts that AQIM incorporates good terrorist methods: choosing the right target, surveillance and successful ambush. AQIM cell leader Ali Abou al-Hajjah sits on the ground among a group of fighters in the mountains. The camera focuses on the fighters' faces, covered and uncovered. The fighters do not appear to be particularly young. Al-Hajjah outlines an attack.

¶ 15. (U) The video next shows fighters making a rudimentary bomb. The camera zooms in on a Google Earth map of some army barracks. A crawler at the bottom of the screen describes the long hours of surveillance and the upcoming attack. Jihadi music fades in. There are quick images of unrest that date back to 2001 in Khenchla, emphasizing the unfairness of the current government and the suffering of the Algerian people. The crawler indicates the attack is in Tahouhet, Tizi Ouzou. (Note: This footage is from a January 2007 attack. End Note)

¶ 16. (U) A fusillade of gunfire hits two military SUVs that careen into the side of a hill. Two soldiers return fire but bullets detonate the gas tanks and the cars ignite. Although the narrator claims at least 7 soldiers were killed, only two charred bodies are visible. A jihadist retrieves one of the dead soldier's machine guns. Two helicopters fly overhead as the jihadists scatter back into the mountains.

¶ 17. (U) The narrator reads a printed message from Droukdal, urging viewers to repent their sins. He warns that enlisted men who repent upon completion of the mandatory one-year service will not be harmed. He promises to kill, crucify,

ALGIERS 00000997 002 OF 002

torture and chop off the hands and feet of any soldier who continues to serve in the military or joins the intelligence service. Droukdal insists that the best way to help AQIM is to proselytize, and send money and weapons. This message is dated March 14, 2007.

Website Difficulties

¶ 18. (C) On July 3, Al-Fajr media network's al-Farkan website www.w-n-n.com announced the debut of AQIM's Shadows of the Sword, Part II. The announcement alone received 2,446 hits in four days. The video received 878 hits in the same amount of time. However, by July 7 we could no longer download AQIM's videos directly from www.qmaghreb.org or from www.w-n-n.com. Noting the popularity of this website, Rahmani suspected Algerian security service (the DRS) blocked the website's download function. On July 8, he pointed out that AQIM webmasters noted this change and quickly directed viewers to another link to allow unhindered downloading of the video at www.archive.org/details/33kamen. (Note: kamen is the Arabic word for ambush). Over a period of 5 days, there have been 1,553 downloads. (Note: AQIM's website is registered in Toronto, Canada at Street 1, 96 Mowat Avenue. The unnamed registrant can be reached by e-mail at: maghreb.org@contactprivacy.com. End Note)

¶ 19. (C) COMMENT: Shadows of the Sword, Part II has format similar to other AQIM videos. Interestingly, this latest video carries a Droukdal threat against drafted soldiers that is reminiscent of the threats against soldiers during the 1990s Islamic Armed Group (GIA) violence. Also notable in the new video, Droukdal and the narrators do not reaffirm their devotion to al-Qaeda and the global jihad. The video does demonstrate AQIM's prowess in the Kabylie region, as if to taunt the Algerian military that has recently claimed successes on the ground in those mountains. If the website is to be believed (and our contacts think it is), AQIM appears focused on domestic military targets and not pursuing action beyond its border. As if in support of that assessment, on July 11 an apparent suicide vehicle bomb rammed the entrance to a military barracks area in the town

of Lakhdaria, in the Kabylie region about 120 km east of Algiers. At least eight people were killed, including a number of soldiers. AQIM quickly claimed responsibility for the attack.

DAUGHTON